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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 24th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 7 July 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. HUSLID (Norway)

later: Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile)

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Operational activities for development

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (E/1993/34, 72, 73, 91, L.24, DP/1993/L.9, E/1993/Misc.2 and Add.1)

The PRESIDENT recalled that, at its forty-seventh session, the General Assembly had, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to promote an early agreement on a common interpretation of the programme approach and of national execution to be applied by the United Nations system and to report thereon to the Economic and Social Council (General Assembly resolution 47/199). The General Assembly had also stressed the need for the Council to examine the operational activities of the United Nations system with a view to ensuring implementation of the resolution and making recommendations thereon.

Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development), introducing the progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 (E/1993/73), said that the world was facing new challenges today and it would be difficult for the Council to maintain its leadership role in the management of the operational activities of the United Nations system if the restructuring exercise, currently at an impasse, was not, as the Secretary General hoped, put back on track before the next session of the General Assembly. As the Secretary-General had pointed out, reforms of the intergovernmental system were both necessary and overdue. Furthermore, restructuring should involve a renewed commitment by all donors to a substantial increase in resources for operational activities for development on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, commensurate with the increasing needs of developing countries. It was essential for the 1993 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities to yield decidedly more positive results than the 1992 Conference. The developing countries had ever increasing and varied requirements, which the United Nations system field structure was well placed to satisfy.

That system was taking energetic steps to implement all the provisions of resolution 47/199. With regard to programme development and implementation, the Secretary-General pointed out that work on the common interpretation of the programme approach and of national execution had been completed within the framework of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions

(CCPOQ) and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). As to the country strategy notes, the first results of that initiative showed that it enabled the United Nations system to ensure a more coherent response to the plans and priorities of developing countries. The principles governing the preparation of those notes were stated in Annex II to the Secretary-General's report. The Joint Consultative Group on Policies (JCGP) hoped to achieve the harmonization and adaptation of programming cycles to national budget cycles, strategies and plans within the next two years.

Under the heading of programme support, the Secretary-General raised the problems of decentralization, simplification and harmonization of procedures, evaluation and monitoring, common premises and training. The Secretariat would begin work as soon as possible on a common United Nations system-wide manual on procedures relating to programme-component and project formulation, appraisal, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The report also described the progress made in the training sector.

The report referred to the consultations being held on the strengthening of the resident coordinator system. The issues of coordination mechanisms, technical and financial support, the implementation of ACC guidelines, recruitment procedures and their transparency and the division of labour among various sectors of the United Nations system were being given careful consideration and he hoped to be able to report some progress on them to the Council at its 1994 session.

Chapter VI of the report dealt with three major issues, namely, science and technology for development, on which the Council would have to take some decisions, human development and economic and social reforms. An overview of the work programme for the implementation of resolution 47/199 was provided in annex I of the report. The concern for comprehensive management and for an integrated concept of cooperation for development on which General Assembly resolution 47/199 was based had also guided the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General. He hoped that that concern, which was shared by the participants in the high-level meetings of the Joint Consultative Group on Policies and the members of CCPOQ, would lead to greater effectiveness and coherence at the country level.

Ms. BERTINI (Executive Director of the World Food Programme), introducing the report of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CPA) (E/1993/91), said that 1992 had been a particularly challenging year for WFP because of the substantial increase in the need for humanitarian assistance and pressures on development programmes. WFP had provided more food and relief than ever. Its greatest efforts had been made in southern Africa and Somalia, but Angola, Liberia, Sudan, the former Yugoslavia and many other countries had also received substantial food deliveries. The situation in Somalia appeared to have become more stable and, following the peace agreement, the situation in Mozambique was relatively promising.

Although it had not been much publicized, the drought in southern Africa had required more food than any other emergency. It was estimated that over 18 million people were threatened with starvation, but, as a result of speedy and coordinated action by the countries of the region and the international community, famine had been avoided. WFP had been designated coordinator by the United Nations and had worked jointly with the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) and with all the appropriate United Nations agencies to transport the necessary supplies through the region to the persons affected.

Expenditure on emergency projects had totalled $1.2 billion in 1992. One reason for the increase had been the new cooperation agreement with UNHCR, under which WFP undertook to provide food for refugee operations.

WFP had been able to allocate only $420 million to development projects in 1992. However, effective development programmes were critically important if poverty was to be eradicated and if countries were to become self-sufficient. Those programmes also constituted the basis for the success of WFP's emergency assistance activities. Because WFP always had a large volume of food supplies in transit to development projects, they could be "diverted" to any emergency activity at any time.

In 1992, two important projects had been added to WFP's range of development activities: the Disaster Mitigation and Rehabilitation Programme for Africa and the comprehensive review of the development programmes undertaken so far. An important point was that WFP's 1992 budget had been only about $100 million.

At present, individual WFP projects required the approval of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes (CFA), but it was planning to adopt the programme approach. WFP was currently working to develop improved country strategy outlines, which were the framework for WFP country activities. Moreover, after participating actively in the deliberations of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), which had developed guidelines for resident coordinators on the preparation of country strategy notes, she had requested all WFP Directors of Operations to cooperate, under the leadership of the resident coordinators, with Governments interested in drawing up country strategy notes. The latter would be forwarded to CFA and their relationship with the country strategy outlines would be reviewed.

To comply with General Assembly resolution 47/199, WFP was planning to strengthen the measures it was already taking to help Governments improve their capabilities in food handling, storage, logistics and accountability. As to humanitarian assistance, special logistics operations were sometimes set up, but efforts were made to hand over to Governments as soon as feasible.

With regard to the selection of resident coordinators, CFA had agreed that particular attention should be paid to the quality and development expertise of candidates and that posts should be open to persons from all United Nations agencies. The resident coordinator should also be the representative of the Secretary-General and, in that capacity, he could not be in charge of another programme.

Mr. JOLLY (Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that the UNICEF Executive Board, which had met in April-May 1993, had reviewed the progress made in achieving the goals of the World Summit for Children. So far, over 80 countries had prepared national programmes of action to achieve those goals and those efforts had, in some cases, resulted in significant progress for children. There had, for example, been an increase in the use of oral rehydration therapy, which had saved millions of lives a year. In addition, the Executive Board had approved 24 country programmes that were all linked to the goals of the World Summit and were aimed at supporting national programmes of action prepared in cooperation with other United Nations agencies. In any event, it could be said that the World Summit

had contributed directly to a considerable improvement in the conditions of millions of children around the world. At a time of widespread doubt about the effectiveness of the United Nations, he invited the members of the Economic and Social Council to read the UNICEF report carefully because of the many positive and encouraging developments it described. The report of the Executive Board (E/1993/34) also referred to the priority efforts being made for Africa, recent efforts in central and eastern Europe and in the newly independent States, structural adjustment in Latin America, education, women and the girl child, UNICEF's cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in the area of family planning and the question of strengthening national capacities.

The Executive Board had also discussed the implementation of resolution 47/199. Broadly speaking, the Board felt that CCPOQ had done some excellent work on the establishment of policy guidelines for the resident coordinator system and for the country strategy notes. The latter would constitute the reference framework that would make it possible better to adapt programmes to the priorities set by Governments and to coordinate the programmes of the different organizations. UNICEF was pleased that the national approach, which it had defended for a long time, had been adopted as the basis for the programme approach.

UNICEF was also very much in favour of the resident coordinator system which allowed activities within the United Nations system at the country level to be coordinated in such a way that the efficiency and impartiality of the various agencies were protected. Admittedly, the system had not yet yielded all the results that might have been expected and, in many countries, meetings on the substantive issues had not been held regularly enough, but there had been progress in a number of other areas. For example, plans had been submitted by the organizations belonging to the Joint Consultative Group on Policies to their lead agencies in order to harmonize the different programming cycles.

Lastly, he felt that the United Nations agencies had given all possible guarantees of their desire for coordination. The matter had been discussed by the members of the Economic and Social Council for two days. However, the inadequate resources made available for humanitarian activities did not seem to be of much interest to the Council. Similarly, the lack of proportion between

the resources made available for armed peace-keeping operations and those allocated to humanitarian assistance had not been discussed at all. Those were not easy questions, but the Council was duty bound to consider real economic and social problems in order to enable United Nations agencies to become genuine instruments of action.

Mr. GRAISSE (United Nations Development Programme) introduced the extract from the report of the UNDP Governing Council on its organizational meeting for 1993, its special session and its fortieth session (E/1993/L.24).

He drew the attention of the Council to certain decisions of the Governing Council which had a particular impact on the operational activities of the United Nations development system. In decision 93/11 on humanitarian programmes, the Governing Council had reaffirmed the need to develop an operational framework under the overall authority of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and to ensure that resident coordinators were in a position to execute their emergency coordination functions effectively. In decision 93/2, the Governing Council had recalled that, under the provisions of Agenda 21, UNDP was called upon to play a leading role in building national capacities for sustainable development and for the implementation of Agenda 21 and had approved the decision of the Administrator to launch Capacity 21. In decision 93/12, it had refined its guidance to the Administrator on the implementation of Capacity 21. In decision 93/3, it had approved the allocation of indicative planning figures to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Georgia, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Tajikistan. In decision 93/22, it had agreed to do the same action for Eritrea and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Altogether, the Governing Council had approved 27 country programmes and 15 extensions (decision 93/20). In decision 93/18 on the least developed countries, the Governing Council had requested the Administrator to strengthen the overall capacity of UNDP to deal with the needs of those countries and, in decision 93/17, it had requested him to contribute fully to the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. In decision 93/30, it had encouraged the Department for Development Support and Management Services to help strengthen national capacities for programme management and project execution and implementation, stressing further the importance of the clarification of the

division of labour between that Department and other United Nations organs dealing with technical cooperation, especially UNDP. In decision 93/31, the Governing Council had called on the United Nations Development Fund for Women to continue its active support to UNDP and the other members of the Joint Consultative Group on Policies in gender-related programme areas. In decision 93/33 on the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian office, it had reconfirmed its support for the UNDP-UNSO/UNEP joint venture. In decision 93/39, it had requested the Administrator to facilitate the implementation of certain decisions of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. In decision 93/42, it had accepted the modalities for the transfer of the Office for Project Services, which would become a semi-autonomous entity located in the Department for Development Support and Management Services. Lastly, it had approved the budget estimates for the 1994-1995 biennium, which incorporated a reduction of some $42 million compared with the 1992-1993 budget (decision 93/35).

In decision 93/16, the Governing Council had also requested the Administrator to strengthen further the efforts of UNDP to implement resolution 47/199 and to provide feedback on the implementation of the resolution, especially at the field level. Following the development of a common interpretation of the programme approach to be used in the entire United Nations system, UNDP, in consultation with Governments and agencies, had drawn up guiding principles that were being issued for use by its field offices. With regard to the system of resident representatives and resident coordinators, UNDP had explored, with its partners in the Joint Consultative Group on Policies, ways of widening the pool of candidates for those posts. With its partners, moreover, it had reached agreement on a common interpretation of national execution and was in the process of revising its own operational guidelines and actively promoting national execution as the norm for activities funded by the programme. Progress had also been made on the issue of common premises and in the implementation of other provisions of the resolution relating to human development, economic and social reform and training.

He drew the Council's attention to the report of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries on its eighth

session (DP/1993/L.9) and to the report of the UNDP Administrator on the activities of the United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration (E/1993/72).

He reiterated the concern expressed by the Administrator about the collapse of the negotiations on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations. Its implications were all the more serious as the financial resources of the system were already very limited.

Mr. Somavia (Chile) took the Chair.

Mr. RAO (United Nations Population Fund) (UNFPA) said that the Fund's overriding concern was that its work should correspond exactly to the needs of the peoples and countries it served by ensuring that the best means were chosen and that needs were identified by the persons concerned. He was pleased to report that many positive achievements had taken place, although the inadequacy of resources was a major constraint for developing countries seeking to solve their demographic problems. As the Executive Director had said at an earlier meeting, the Nordic proposal on reforms of United Nations operational activities was an opportunity that should be seized by the world community.

At its fortieth session, the UNDP Governing Council had made many recommendations concerning UNFPA. It had approved 15 country programmes, taken note of the report of the Executive Director on the priority-country system (DP/1993/33) and had reaffirmed the continued use of existing criteria and their threshold levels. It had recognized that expenditure should reflect the actual needs of recipient countries and welcomed the emphasis that had been placed on maternity and child health and on family planning and had called on UNFPA to strengthen further its international economic cooperation activities. It had taken note of the UNFPA strategy in Sub-Saharan Africa and had welcomed the progress made in the Global Initiative on Contraceptive Requirements and Logistic Management Needs in Developing Countries. It had taken note of the collaboration established between the Fund and the World Bank and the financial arrangements adopted for support costs.

In considering the report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199, the Governing Council had said that the Fund's experience in programme review and strategy development placed it in a position to contribute

to the formulation of country strategy notes and the development of a common programme approach. The new support-cost arrangements were, in its view, an integral component of strategic programming and should contribute to national execution and decentralization at the country level. The Governing Council had also welcomed the efforts of UNFPA, working through the Joint Consultative Group on Policies, to harmonize programming cycles and adapt them to national development plans.

Many other key components of resolution 47/199, such as the programme approach and the coordination and harmonization of procedures and programming cycles, were areas in which UNFPA had been trying to make progress for several years. The Fund also continued to support the implementation of other components of the resolution such as national execution, national capacity building, decentralization of programme development and delegation of authority, coordination of activities both within and outside the United Nations system, streamlining and harmonization of rules and regulations, procedures and programming cycles and, lastly, common premises.

The Executive Director had recently written to all UNFPA representatives and country directors urging them to cooperate actively in the process of developing country strategy notes in countries which had opted for that system.

Another key component of resolution 47/199 was the resident coordinator system, which UNFPA fully supported because, in its view, there should be a single United Nations representation per country. The resident coordinator should represent the entire system, under the administrative responsibility of UNDP, and ensure the overall coordination of United Nations activities. However, UNFPA felt that the time had come to strengthen the identity and authority of UNFPA country directors in order to enhance the effectiveness of its programmes.

Population issues were now at the forefront of the development agenda, whether in connection with sustainable development, Agenda 21, poverty eradication or migrations. The level of resources for dealing with those problems was very inadequate. The United Nations system, including UNFPA, and donor countries were working together at the field level to strengthen the capacities of developing countries and thus enable them to take up their

development challenges. However, the inadequacy of resources was still the major constraint.

Mr. VAN CRAEN (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, recalled that they had supported draft resolution A/47/L.58 on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. In a spirit of compromise, they had agreed to two amendments to a text which had been drafted after lengthy negotiations. They deeply regretted that the consideration of that draft resolution had been postponed when it had come up for discussion in the General Assembly, on 25 June in New York. Apparently, most member States were not prepared to improve the effectiveness of the development assistance system. The European Community nevertheless continued to support the Secretary-General in his restructuring plans so that the Economic and Social Council could perform its function of managing the economic and social sector of the United Nations.

Six months had elapsed since the adoption of resolution 47/199 and, in the meanwhile, meetings had been held of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), the Joint Consultative Group on Policies (JCGP) and the Governing Councils of UNICEF and UNDP. He listed some of the measures already in force, of which the European Community had taken note.

Many questions had, however, still not been answered. It was true that little time had been spent on the implementation of the resolution and that the institutional and operational environment in which it had to be applied was very complex. It was nevertheless an instrument which was designed to improve and strengthen the coordination of operational activities and which should not in any circumstances be regarded as another constraint on the system.

More positive follow-up action on resolution 47/199 could have been taken in several areas. In the first place, the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development was not doing enough in its role of leader and lead agency. The division in charge of operational activities was still understaffed and consideration might be given to the possibility of assigning it staff from other United Nations agencies. With regard to the decentralization that had been called for, the member States of the Community recalled that policy should continue to be made at the central level. The agencies concerned, especially

UNDP, should assume greater responsibility for field-level coordination. Every agency, fund and programme should contribute, to the best of its ability, to the implementation of the resolution. The resident coordinators should take more initiatives along those lines and, for example, make practical proposals on matters such as country strategy notes, field-level decentralization and common premises.

The community appealed to recipient countries to contribute to the speedy implementation of resolution 47/199. Their cooperation was essential in virtually every area dealt with in the resolution and the implementation of its provisions was in their interest.

Ms. POLLACK (United States of America) said that the reforms called for in General Assembly resolutions 44/211 and 47/199 were far from complete. Admittedly, both resolutions were complex and asked a great deal of a system with limited resources. However, it was not coordination so much as the lack of coordination that was costly. It had been only seven months since the adoption of resolution 47/199, but resolution 44/211 had been adopted three and a half years previously and resolution 32/197 dated from 1977.

For years now, member States had been concerned and impatient about the lack of collaboration, inefficient programming and the lack of complementarity of the activities of United Nations agencies. They had, for example, asked for an appropriate management process with clear guidelines, targets, benchmarks and time-frames. What progress had been made? Although a common interpretation of the programme approach had recently been developed, that process had already been under way in many countries. What results had that approach achieved? Had it made the system more coherent? Did it hinder or help the work of individual agencies? More importantly, did it help countries meet their development needs? How did it relate to the country strategy note?

In 1989, in its resolution 44/211, the General Assembly had asked the Secretariat to study the concept of a document containing the United Nations system's integrated operational response, at the country level, to the national programme framework. That document, which was supposed to give greater coherence to the programmes of United Nations agencies, was conceptually not very different from the country strategy notes called for in resolution 47/199.

Resolution 47/199 provided that country strategy notes should be formulated by "interested" Governments, but their formulation should be less a matter of interest than a matter of necessity. In any event, seven months after the adoption of resolution 47/199, there had been enough time to ascertain the number of "interested" countries. Why had they found the idea worth pursuing and what could be done to interest others?

Her Government attached the greatest importance to the leadership role of the resident coordinator. It called on all the agencies taking part in the current discussion to make available their most talented staff for those posts, for the enormous demands being made of the system called for the best and the brightest. However, even the most talented leader would have difficulties if his or her colleagues were not committed to working together, both in the field and at Headquarters. The system was working in a number of countries and the common feature of all those situations was the quality of the persons involved, at all levels.

Mr. FRIIS (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the current discussions were taking place against a very different background than what might have been hoped a few weeks earlier because the important process of the reform of United Nations development activities had been brought to a halt. For the Nordic countries, a strong United Nations in the political area should be complemented by a strong United Nations in the economic and social fields. There could be no lasting peace without a remedy for the growing economic and social inequalities in the world.

For the past several years, the Nordic countries had been making considerable efforts to submit constructive proposals for strengthening United Nations development activities through reforms relating to policy guidance, operational governance and the system of financing. At its 1992 session, the Council had initiated the process of reform at the political level and significant progress had been made in the months which had followed. It was thus with profound regret that the Nordic countries took note of the fact that no action had been taken on the draft resolution recently submitted to the General Assembly. The draft resolution had been the result of lengthy and delicate negotiations, in which all parties had made substantial concessions.

The countries which had seen fit to break up the agreement should be aware that they bore a very heavy responsibility. In his view, the vote on the motion to postpone action meant that the majority of the members of the United Nations were not prepared to agree on the necessary changes that would have improved the efficiency of the United Nations development system. That situation could not but seriously affect the level of donor contributions for multilateral assistance and the ability of United Nations organizations to continue to mobilize resources in an increasingly competitive environment. The immediate effect was that the discussions on future financing modalities, which should have started at the next session of the General Assembly, would not take place.

When General Assembly resolution 47/199 had been adopted, the Nordic countries had regarded it, even though it did not meet all their concerns, as an expression of the common will to make the operational activities of the United Nations system more efficient. They therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's progress report on the implementation of that resolution, even though the progress so far, six months after its adoption, was necessarily limited. Some elements of the report were particularly important. The Nordic countries found that the country strategy note could serve as a useful tool for ensuring a coherent approach by the United Nations system to development activities at the field level. They were also pleased that an agreement had been reached on a common interpretation of national execution and the programme approach, which would be helpful in ensuring well-coordinated United Nations assistance that was better integrated into national development plans and in avoiding scattered projects.

The Nordic countries also attached importance to the enhancement of the role of the resident coordinator, who should be given the necessary authority to enable him to ensure that activities were carried out in accordance with national priorities and within the framework established by the country strategy note and the programme approach. In so doing, however, efforts should be made to avoid introducing a bureaucratic layer and to maintain the identity of the various funds and programmes. In the selection of resident coordinators, qualifications should be the deciding factor. The action taken in respect of common premises should be intensified. The cost effectiveness of shared field representations

should also be taken into account, given the problems of resource constraints on several United Nations agencies: it was self-evident that in the case of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States, a unified approach should be adopted from the very start.

Mr. JAMALUDDIN (Bangladesh) said that the discussion on operational activities was all the more critical as the resources for the implementation of projects were becoming scarce, a tendency that was causing serious concern. With regard to the content of the Secretary-General's report, he stressed that more and more projects should be executed by the countries concerned, as that would strengthen their absorptive capacity. The role of resident coordinators could be made more effective if the right people were chosen and if they were given more authority.

In the matter of procurement and expert services, the local market should be used as much as possible. In Bangladesh, food could be procured locally for distribution by the World Food Programme, thus ensuring a fair price for growers and minimizing the cost of the Programme's operations. Local consultants selected on a competitive basis should receive the same remuneration as international consultants.

The spirit of Rio was weakening and there had been no substantive discussion on how to mobilize resources to implement agenda 21.

With regard to technical cooperation among development countries, priority should be given to the needs of the least developed countries. Because assistance was provided by different agencies, coordination among donor agencies with a view to streamlining was necessary. Support for that type of cooperation should not be given at the expense of assistance in respect of projects and commodities.

He regretted the problems caused by delay and indecision in the United Nations system. For example, the failure to appoint an Executive Director was hampering the operational activities of the International Trade Centre.

Mr. HIRAISHI (Japan) said that United Nations operational activities for development were facing financing problems, as well as pressure by a growing number of recipient countries on the United Nations to expand its activities and

use a broader range of implementation modalities. In the case of financing, operational activities, the programmes of multilateral financing institutions and bilateral assistance, which were supposed to play complementary roles, were also competing with one another for limited resources. The United Nations should therefore made efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of its operations to prevent them from being marginalized in the process.

The Secretary-General's progress report offered a comprehensive overview which should bring about improvements in precisely that area. In that connection, his delegation was impressed with the work done by inter-agency mechanisms such as the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), the Joint Consultative Group on Policies (JCGP) and their various subgroups and encouraged them to continue to adopt an integrated and systematic approach.

As far as the functioning of intergovernmental bodies was concerned, it was widely recognized that reform was necessary and that an entity was needed to discuss development issues and provide the United Nations system with guidance on policy. His delegation considered that the Council could be restructured in such a way that it would be able to discharge those functions. Its responsibilities and those of the General Assembly should be clearly defined and overlapping functions eliminated. To that end, the work of the General Assembly should be streamlined and provision should be made for a triennial review of operational activities so that the Assembly could provide the necessary major policy guidance, as it had done in its resolutions 44/211 and 47/199. The Council should assume responsibility for managing those activities and provide the executing agencies concerned with clear and coherent guidance on a yearly basis. In order to improve the management of United Nations agencies, his delegation suggested that each governing body should establish an inter-sessional mechanism to monitor the implementation of its decisions and to facilitate the dialogue between its executive administration and Member States.

In his delegation's view, extremely urgent reform was needed in field-level activities, to which the report rightly devoted a great deal of attention. The country strategy note could serve as a basis for the integration of the related activities of the recipient country and of the United Nations system, as well as for national execution. He therefore urged the recipient countries to adopt such

a practice. For its part, the United Nations system should also pursue such measures as decentralization, harmonization and adaptation of programming cycles, as well as simplification of rules and procedures.

Lastly, it was essential that the resident coordinator system and field-level coordination mechanisms should be strengthened. In that connection, it was particularly important not only to widen the pool of qualified development specialists eligible for recruitment, in order to ensure a better balance and a wider range of expertise, but also to make the selection process more transparent.

Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco) said that his delegation attached great importance to the operational activities for development of the United Nations system and to the neutrality, objectivity and multilateralism which had always characterized them. Like many other delegations, it believed that the United Nations could protect its credibility only by strengthening its political, economic and social sectors in a systematic and complementary way and that the entire system would be damaged if any one of those components was weakened. The level of available resources was a source of frustration, especially in the light of the hopes raised by the Rio Conference. The tendency was to reduce the financial resources allocated to operational activities for development and to international cooperation in general.

With regard to the implementation of resolution 47/199, he noted that it was an extension of resolution 44/211 and that many more practical measures could have been implemented in the meantime. The Secretary-General's report described measures that were under consideration or to be adopted, but none had been carried out so far. It was therefore not an adequate indicator of the progress made. While his delegation welcomed the fact that an agreement had been reached on the interpretation of the programme approach and of national execution, it thought that the modalities in question should already have been implemented. It noted with satisfaction that the representatives of the United Nations and related agencies at the national and regional levels had been informed of the provisions of resolution 47/199. That was a most helpful initiative because field offices were sometimes ignorant of the content of the resolutions and were

aware only of the decisions adopted by the governing bodies to which they belonged.

More would have to be done about the recruitment base for the resident coordinators. That appeared to be a sensitive issue, but the implementation of the relevant provisions of resolution 47/199 was essential in order to increase the pool of candidates for those posts and to make the selection process more transparent to enable experts with different profiles to be chosen according to country.

He also pointed out that field offices had been assigned additional responsibilities because of the importance attached to the multidisciplinary approach and to support at the field level. However, as stated in the Secretary-General's report, financial resources and experts were still lacking. His delegation would have liked to know what the reaction of recipient countries had been to the idea of drafting a country strategy note because, on that point, the report did not say how many countries were in fact interested or what problems might have been encountered.

Regarding the vote in the General Assembly on the draft resolution on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, his delegation, like others, regretted that such a matter had been put to the vote. Time and time again, Morocco had stressed the importance of reforms and the need to have the support of all Member States to make such reforms credible. It must be recognized that a fair proportion of delegations had had difficulties in endorsing one particular paragraph of the text in question. It was to be hoped that, following the Secretary-General's appeal, the deliberations on that subject could be resumed before the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly so that a consensus could be reached, perhaps after minor amendments had been made. The respective functions assigned to the Council, the General Assembly and the different bodies in the resolution in question mattered more than the number of members of a governing council. The countries which had voted in favour of postponing consideration of the draft resolution had not taken any pleasure in doing so and had not done so in an irresponsible way or out of a desire for confrontation with donor countries. Their legitimate concerns would

have to be taken into consideration in order to arrive at a result that was satisfactory to all.

Mr. BARNETT (United Kingdom) said that the debate on operational activities for development was a valuable opportunity for a frank dialogue between Member States and representatives of the United Nations system on the implementation of resolution 47/199 and related issues. Such a debate should, however, be sensibly structured. The Secretary-General's report dealt with the issues at stake in a definite sequence. He therefore suggested that, in due course, the Council should hold an exchange of views issue by issue, if possible in a meeting room that was more suited to a genuine dialogue.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.